BRITISH COLUMBIA MARKETING BOARD

A Strategic Plan

December 1991

BACKGROUND - The Present Agriculture Environment

British Columbia's primary agricultural sector makes an important contribution to the economy and social fabric of the province and the nation. In 1990, the total value of agricultural products sold by B.C. farmers was well over one billion dollars. The sector produces an enormous variety of products (agriculture in B.C. is more diverse than in any other province) and provides almost half of the food purchased by B.C. consumers. Certain agricultural industries in B.C. contribute significantly to national production totals (e.g., B.C. is the second largest producer of horticultural products, accounting for 15% of the Canadian farm gate). Primary agriculture also provides direct employment for over 33 000 people, in occupations ranging from seasonal harvesting to high-tech crop or herd management.

Despite its importance and its undeniable successes, however, the province's agricultural sector faces a number of serious challenges:

- increased globalization and freer trade (occurring as a result of recent international trade agreements) and creating more competitive market conditions, even as they open up new opportunities

- changing public priorities and concerns (e.g., increased emphasis on food quality, environmental protection, sustainable development, and animal rights) are adding to the factors that agricultural producers must take into account

- limitations on the province's resource base are becoming more apparent, causing the potential for land-use conflict to increase. *

Within this agriculture environment are products which are regulated by marketing boards and commissions. The British Columbia Marketing Board fully supports such regulated marketing as an effective and worthwhile system to meet these challenges. The system should be supported and assisted in such a way as to ensure that the British Columbia agriculture industry survives and prospers.

Regulated marketing has been successful in meeting challenges in the past and can adapt to the future.

* ("The Agricultural Work Force - A Strategy for the Future" - The Joint Management Committee for Agricultural Employment Policy, Governments of Canada and British Columbia, April 1991)

INTRODUCTION

Careful planning is essential if the challenges facing the agricultural industry are to be addressed.

To play its part more effectively, the British Columbia Marketing Board has initiated this planning process to develop an on-going strategic plan for the Board.

The importance of developing strategies and communicating those strategies is widely accepted. Difficulty arises, however, in the actual development and in the implementation of the strategies. The approach used in developing this strategic plan for the BCMB endeavours to address both of these problems.

In developing strategies it is necessary to realize that they are simply statements that clarify what major objectives are to be achieved. So far, so good, but how does one plan in this turbulent environment that is attempting to cope with free trade and the continuing trade and tariff discussions among other uncertainties? We can identify with the point of view of a director in charge of marketing and communications for a Canadian management consultant firm who said, some time ago: "— what I see today is not what will be visible two years from now. Our strategies tend to assume an orderly, predictable, evolutionary world when, in fact, we operate in a revolutionary world, in which the planning role is not so much strategic as intuitive, tentative, flexible, reversible, risky and short-range."

Given these realities, this strategic plan will continue to evolve. The plan will be examined and up-dated frequently. It is based on an assessment of current and future needs, problems and concerns - on expectations for the future and not solely on past experiences.

This document deals with the development of the strategies (Phase 1). Phase 2 will document the implementation - an action plan outlining commitment of resources, responsibilities and time frames to complete the plan.

THE PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the effectiveness of the regulated marketing system in British Columbia through supervisory, appellate and signatory functions.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

In carrying out this mission, the BCMB is committed to the following principles:

- That steps be taken to help ensure that British Columbia's agricultural sector survives and prospers in a global economy.

- Regulated marketing is an effective means of increasing market efficiency and helps ensure a domestic supply of high quality food at reasonable prices.

- Cooperation and industry participation in resolving problems in each agricultural sector is essential.

- The interest of all parties affected by regulated marketing must be recognized and balanced.

STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Specifically the BCMB will pursue the following strategies and objectives:

1. THE APPEAL FUNCTION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION (GOAL)

To act as an appeal body for any individual or organization dissatisfied with a decision of a commodity board or commission; to render fair and impartial decisions on matters under appeal and to improve the appeal process.

Strategic Objectives

a) To work with the marketing boards and commissions in improving the decision-making processes.

b) To ensure that all parties affected by decisions of boards and commissions are advised of their right to appeal and of the appeal procedures.

c) To provide clear explanations for BCMB decisions in a timely fashion.

d) To implement a mediation procedure available to interested parties.

e) To seek amendments to legislation to increase appeal deposits.

f) To ensure that BCMB members receive on-going training in all aspects of appeal procedures.

g) To institute a process of pretrial conferencing.

h) To reduce the number of frivolous or vexatious appeals.

2. THE SUPERVISORY FUNCTION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION (GOAL)

To review the administrative and operational activities of the individual boards and commissions to ensure that the interests of all parties affected by regulated marketing are recognized and balanced.

Strategic Objectives

a) To enhance communications between the BCMB and marketing boards and commissions by:
   - Meeting with all boards and commissions on an annual or semi-annual basis,
   - Having further meetings between members and staffs of individual boards and commissions, as required.

b) To review the structure and operations of all the boards and commissions on a regular basis.

c) To review the minutes, orders and rules of the individual commodity boards and commissions to ensure that they do not violate existing legislation, exceed their power or authority or negatively impact on affected parties.

d) To encourage boards and commissions to pay increased attention to marketing aspects of their activities, where appropriate.

e) To ensure that marketing boards and commissions do not unnecessarily restrict the entry of new producers.

f) To monitor the enforcement mechanisms of marketing boards and commissions.

g) To encourage an increased number of education and orientation seminars for all members and appropriate staff of all boards and commissions.

3. THE SIGNATORY FUNCTION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION (GOAL)

As a signatory to the Federal-Provincial Agreements for the marketing of eggs, broiler hatching eggs and turkey, to support policies which result in appropriate economic changes and provincial market growth.

Strategic Objectives

a) To ensure effective exchange of information between all provincial signatories related to the agreements.

b) To encourage meetings amongst the provincial signatories in order to develop British Columbia's positions.

c) To represent the interests of British Columbia by attending meetings held at the federal/provincial level.

d) Where appropriate, to participate on Agency committees.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL FUNCTION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION (GOAL)

To ensure that the BCMB operates effectively, provides sound leadership and remains focused on its mission and objectives.

Strategic Objectives

a) To improve and develop a positive image for regulated marketing in British Columbia.

b) To recommend consolidation and revision of natural products marketing legislation, ensuring consistency between schemes and to ensure that the legislation adequately reflects the current environment.

c) To finalize the development of criteria for the approval of the designation of marketing agencies.

d) To complete the BCMB workplan, addressing current issues and objectives.